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CIRCULAR,—THE CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER ARE TO BE REGARDED AS

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL.

MONTREAL, 18th December, 1851.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

The Committee appointed by the Synod, to watch over the interests of our Church, in so far as these might be affected by the action of the Legislature on the Clergy Reserves, beg now to inform you, that a Bill for their entire Secularisation, has been passed, and having received the Governor's sanction, has become law.

That Bill provides in terms of the Imperial Act, for the payment, during their incumbency, of the Salaries of all Ministers settled previous to the 9th May, 1853, the date of the passage of the Imperial Act. But it also contains a clause authorising the Governor in Council to commute with Ministers for their Salaries, by the immediate payment of such sums as, on the principles of Life Assurance, their lives are supposed to be worth; the consent, however, of the proper Ecclesiastical authorities being necessary before any commutation can be effected.

As a matter of public policy, the Government is desirous of putting an end as speedily as possible, to all payments of Clergy from the public purse, and professes to be willing to commute immediately, in a just and liberal spirit.

The Committee are of opinion that advantage should be taken of this offer, and they entertain hopes that if each Minister will at once confer authority on such parties as may be authorised by the Synod to act in the matter, a sum may be obtained, the interest of which, with that of the balance in the hands of the Clergy Reserve Commissioners, will be sufficient to pay the full, or nearly the full amount of the present allowances from that fund, while the capital will remain untouched for the permanent endowment of the Church.

This endowment will be entirely free from control either by the Government or Parliament and will be managed solely by parties appointed by the Synod, as the private property of the Church, and therefore not liable to be attacked amidst the strife of political warfare.

The attainment of this result must be regarded as in the highest degree desirable, and would in some measure compensate for the loss of the Reserves, as what is lost in amount would, in the opinion of the Committee, be gained in security.

It is not to be supposed that even if some personal sacrifice was necessary to secure so important a benefit to the Church, Ministers would shrink from making it: but all that seems necessary at present is, that measures should be promptly taken for a general commutation.

To this end a meeting of Synod is forthwith required, the business to be transacted at which may be

*First.*—To authorise commutation; and fix generally, at least, the terms on which it should be effected.

*Second.*—To recommend immediate commutation to all the Ministers of our Church.

*Third.*—To name parties to act for the Synod in the matter of commutation, and to recommend that Ministers individually give to the same parties the necessary power to commute for them.

*Fourth.*—To appoint a Committee to take the necessary steps to get an Act of Incorporation for the management of the General Fund.

*Fifth.*—To lay down the general rules or principles by which such management is to be guided.

With a view to this important business a requisition has been addressed to the Moderator, requesting him to summon a meeting of Synod as early as the forms of the Church will admit.

At this season of the year a very numerous attendance of Ministers is not to be expected; the Committee have, therefore, judged it necessary to give these explanations, that those who do not attend personally, may have an opportunity of communicating their views or suggestions by writing.

As soon as the Synod has given its decision on the various points alluded to, printed forms giving power of Attorney to Commissioners appointed by the Synod, will be sent to each Minister for signature, and every exertion will be made to have a safe and satisfactory arrangement completed without delay, nor can it be doubted that prompt and united action will, under the blessing of God, be attended with the most beneficial results to the Church.

We are,

Reverend and Dear Sir,

Your's faithfully,

JOHN COOK, D. D., *Chairman.*

*Hydr Allen* . *Secretary.*

To the Reverend

*J. H. MacKerras*  
*Darlington*